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ABSTRACT

This paper describes one aspect of a larger study of the experiences of white families who have adopted transracially. It compares levels of racial awareness, racial preferences, and racial identities between two categories of children: nonwhite children adopted by white families and their white siblings who had been born into those families. The data reported in this paper are based on interviews with 204 families in five cities in the Midwest, all of whom adopted at least one nonwhite child. In total, 366 children were interviewed who were between 3 and 8 years old; 199 of them were adopted, and 167 were born to the parents. The data suggest that in families that have adopted transracially, young children have a somewhat different perspective and a different set of attitudes toward color, and presumably race, than children who are reared in more typical family settings. Fewer of the white as well as the nonwhite children in "transracial" homes associate "white" with the positive and attractive and desirable characteristics that other white as well as black children do in our society. The Negro children perceive themselves as "Negro" as accurately as white children perceive themselves as "white." (Author/JM)

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AN ASSESSMENT OF RACIAL AWARENESS, PREFERENCE AND SELF IDENTITY AMONG WHITE AND ADOPTED NON-WHITE CHILDREN*

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Introduction

This paper describes one aspect of a larger study of the experiences of White families who have adopted transracially. It compares levels of racial awareness, racial preferences, and racial identities among two categories of children: non-White children adopted by White families and their White siblings who had been born into those families.

By "racial awareness" we mean a knowledge of both the visible differences between racial categories and the perceptual cues by which one classifies people into these divisions.[1] By "racial identity" we mean a consciousness of self as belonging to a specific group that is differentiated from other groups by obvious physical characteristics.[2] "Racial preferences" are the attitudes or the evaluations that are attached to racial categories. The major distinction between awareness and identity is that the latter also measures affect about race, while awareness is concerned primarily or exclusively with cognition.

A review of the literature describing empirical studies on these three topics, awareness, preference and identity reveals widespread agreement that pre-school

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[1] Judith D. R. Porter, Black Child, White Child, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1971, p. 13.

[2] Both Kenneth Clark and Erik Erikson have defined racial identity in the above manner. See K. B. Clark and M. P. Clark, op. cit, Readings in Social Psychology, T. M. Newcombe and E. L. Hartley (Eds.), New York, 1947; E. H. Erikson, "A Memorandum on Identity and Negro Youth" in The Negro in America, Talcott Parsons and Kenneth Clark (Eds.), New York, 1966.

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children, i.e. children who are about four years old, have internalized a "racial consciousness" i.e. a racial identity.[3] There is more disagreement about the age at which children demonstrate "racial awareness" and "racial preferences" but the range that most investigators report is between four and seven years.

The relationships that have been reported between the subject's or the respondent's race and these concepts lead to the following conclusions: 1) White, Negro, and Oriental children manifest White racial preferences; 2) White children identify themselves more accurately than do Negro children; 3) The relationship between the respondent's race and his awareness is not as clear as it is for the other two concepts. On the whole, there is more evidence that Negro children acquire a racial awareness earlier than do White children.[4] Many of the studies cited in footnote four also report the relationship between age, sex, socio-economic status and each of these concepts, but we shall discuss them as they relate to our findings that appear farther along in the article. To our knowledge no work published thus far has described the racial awareness, identity, and preferences of non-White children who have White parents and siblings or of White children who have non-White siblings.

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[3] Many of the studies cited in this paper were brought to the author's attention by the excellent review offered in Part I "The Acquisition of Racial Attitudes" of the Porter monograph, See J. Porter, op. cit.

[4] Some of the studies on which these conclusions are based are: R. E. Horowitz, "Racial Aspects of Self Identification in Nursery School Children," The Journal of Psychology, 1939, pp. 91-99; M. E. Goodman, "Evidence Concerning the Genesis of Interracial Attitudes," American Anthropologist, 1948, pp. 624-630; M. E. Goodman, Racial Awareness in Young Children, New York, 1964; J. K. Morland, "Race Awareness Among American and Hong Kong Chinese Children," American Journal of Sociology, November 1969, pp. 360-374; J. E. Williams and J. K. Roberson, op. cit., Education and Psychological Measurement, 1967, pp. 671-689; K. B. Clark and M. P. Clark, op. cit., pp. 169-178; Helen Trager and Marion Yarrow, Children's Perceptions of the Social Roles of Negros and Whites, Journal of Psychology, January 1950, pp. 3-33; Harold M. Stevenson, "Social Interaction in an Inter-racial Nursery School", Genetic Psychology Monographs, 1960, pp. 37-75.

A basic question that this article addresses is: how similar or different are the responses of these children to those of the same sex, age range, race, etc. who have been reared in typical family environments. For example, how does the presence of White parents influence a Negro child's racial identity and racial awareness; and what is the impact of a Negro sibling on a White child's racial preference. Before describing our findings, a few words on the status of trans-racial adoptions in this country might be useful by way of background information.

For many years, social work agencies in the United States were either opposed to or wary of the idea of placing children in homes in which the family's religious, to say nothing of the racial backgrounds, differed from that of the child's. The greater willingness of social work agencies to do so in the past decade or so, stemmed not so much from a change in ideology (at least, that was not the initial impetus) as from a recognition of the state of the market. With the larger numbers of non-White children in need of homes and the willingness of increasing numbers of White families to adopt such children (rather than wait years for a White child or because they specifically preferred=the non-White child), the social work agencies have been changing their policies.

Charles Olds assembled the following statistics on non-White adoptions throughout the country between 1968 and 1971.[5]

	1968	1969	1970	1971
Total Black Children Placed	3122	4336	6474	7420
Placements in Black families	2389	2889	4190	4846
Placements in white families	733	1447	2274	2574
Number of agencies reporting	194	342	427	468

The Children's Bureau estimates that at the present time some 15,000 White American families have adopted transracially.

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[5] Olds is the Director of Opportunity, a program to "Give More Non-White Children a Chance for Adoption," which is a division of The Boys and Girls Aid Society of Oregon.

But as the practice has gained greater acceptance among prospective parents and professional organizations in the White community, it has aroused the opposition of representatives of Black and American Indian groups. At the 1972 convention of the Black Social Workers Association, the membership adopted a resolution that condemned transracial adoptions and advocated its immediate cessation. In their statement the Black social workers argued that "a White family could not successfully transmit a Black identity to a Black child and that it could not equip him with the coping mechanisms he would need for growing up in a racist society."[6] In a recent issue of the National Association of Black Social Workers News, the editors reaffirmed that stance and commented:

> We affirm the violable position of Black children in Black families where they belong physically, psychologically and culturally in order that they receive the total sense of themselves and develop a sound projection of their future.[7]

At a meeting in Ann Arbor, Michigan in July 1972 a group of American Indian leaders also condemned the practice of placing non-White children in White homes, terming such a practice, at least as it applied to Indian children, social genocide.[8]

Sample, Method, and Research Instruments

The data reported in this paper are based on interviews with 204 families in five cities in the Midwest, all of whom adopted at least one non-White child.[9] Eighty-one per cent of these families have at least one White child who was born

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[6] New York Times, April 23, 1971, p. 75.

[7] National Association of Black Social Workers News, New York, January 1973, p. 1.

[8] The Ann Arbor News, July 17, 1972, p. 10.

[9] The sample frame for this study were lists of names supplied to us by the Open Door Society of Illinois, Missouri, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota. The Open Door Society is a national organization composed of parents who have adopted transracially.

to them, and fourteen per cent have adopted at least one White child in addition to their non-White child or children. In total, we interviewed 366 children who were between the ages of three and eight years old; 199 of them were adopted and 167 were born to the parents.[10] Table 1 shown below summarizes the racial, sexual, and adoptive statuses of the children subjects.

Table I: Racial, Sexual, and Adoptive Statuses of Children Subjects

Race	Adoptive Status				Total
	Adopted		Born to Family		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
White	21	21	100	67	209
Negro	75	45	---	--	120
American Indian, Asian, etc.	16	21	---	--	37
Total	112	87	100	67	366

A two-person team of interviewers arrived at the home after each family had been contacted, first by letter, and then by telephone, and their willingness to participate in the study had been confirmed. Only three of the families out of all those we contacted and that met our criteria concerning the ages of the children, were unwilling to participate in the study.[11] One member of the team interviewed one or both parents for between 45 and 90 minutes. The other interviewer talked privately with each child in the family who was between three and eight years old. The interviewers were graduate students from the Universities of Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, and Washington University in St. Louis. They were selected on the basis of their prior experiences working with children,

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[10] In total, there were 708 children in the 204 families.

[11] In one of those families, the father had died a few weeks earlier, and in another the parents had recently been divorced.

their fields of study, and their experiences as interviewers. The interviews with both the parents and the children were recorded.[12]

Three separate tests or instruments were used to measure the children's racial identities, awareness, and preferences. They first involved the use of three baby dolls: one doll looked like a White baby, another looked like a Negro baby, and the third could have been a light skinned Negro baby or an Indian or Asian baby.[13] We introduced this third alternative because we thought the Indian and Asian children would be able to identify with it better than with either of the other dolls whose pigments were either lighter or darker than most of theirs. Each doll was dressed identically; it had on only a diaper. The interviewer asked each child to point to the doll that:

1. You like to play with the best
2. Is a nice doll
3. Looks bad
4. Is a nice color
5. Looks like a Colored child
6. Looks like a Negro child
7. Looks like a White child
8. Looks like you.

The first four items measured racial preferences, the next three measured racial awareness and the last one provided us with a measure of racial identity.

Following the dolls test the children were shown 24 sets of pictures. Each set contained two pictures of the same object, but colored differently. In half of the sets, one of the objects was colored white, the other black. The other twelve sets were dummies. The pictures in those sets were colored red, green,

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[12] In this article we report the results only of the children's interviews. For a description of the families see: Rita J. Simon, "The Multi-Racial Family," (mimeo) 1973.

[13] In essence, we replicated the instruments that the Clarks reported using in their study of racial perceptions and preferences among Negro children between 4 and 7 years of age; except that we had 3 rather than 2 dolls. See K. B. Clark and M. P. Clark, op. cit.

blue, orange, etc.[14] A two-line story was attached to each set of pictures, and each story ended with the experimenter asking the child to choose the object that was bad or dirty or pretty. The adjectives were adopted from the evaluative scales developed by Charles Osgood, et al. and reported in The Measurement of Meaning. These items provided another measure of the children's racial preferences.

The third task asked each child to arrange and identify family members from puzzles that were constructed especially for this study. Fifteen figures were carved out of plywood and each of five figures that represented different family roles could be fitted into the five molds that were carved from a common plywood board. There were three mother figures, identical in size, shape, and in the clothing painted on them. The only difference between the three was that one had skin that resembled that of a White person, another that resembled that of a Negro, and a third that resembled an American Indian or someone from Korea, China, etc. There were three fathers, three sisters, and six brothers (two of which had the same skin color) whose pigments matched those of the three mothers. The children's tasks were to arrange a family with five people in it, to identify the figures who looked like their mother, their father, their sister, or their brothers. They were also asked to arrange families of four people and then to select a friend from one of the remaining pieces. They were asked to choose which child looked most like them, and with which little girl or boy they would most like to play. The children's responses to these various tasks provided measures of racial awareness, racial preference and racial identity.

Findings

In the studies referred to earlier involving dolls and instruments either identical to or similar to those we employed, the findings have consistently shown that both White and Negro children exhibit White racial preferences. On

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[14] For a more detailed description of the task and the procedures employed see J. E. Williams and J. K. Roberson, op. cit.

the awareness and identity dimensions there is not as much consensus, but the most common pattern reported is that Negro children are more aware of racial differences but White children identify themselves more accurately than do Negro children. Since the concept of identity embodies affect, as well as cognition, and since Negro children are more ambivalent about their skin color, these two sets of findings are consistent.

We anticipated that the atypical environment in which our subjects were being reared would produce results that were not congruent with the findings reported in most of the other studies. Specifically, we expected 1) that the non-White children would not demonstrate a White racial preference; 2) that the non-White children would not have a greater sense of racial awareness than the White children; 3) that the White children's racial identity would not be any more accurate than the non-Whites'. Thus, on each of the dimensions we hypothesized that the nature of the children's family setting would have a sufficiently strong impact so as to alter the pattern of responses away from those most often cited.

We report first the children's reactions to the dolls. Each respondent received a score based on the number of times he or she attributed positive qualities to the White doll. A child received one point each time he or she selected the White doll in response to the following choices: which doll would you: 1) like to play with the best, 2) think is a nice doll, 3) think is a nice color, and 4) did not select as the doll that looked bad. Each respondent could have a score that ranged from zero to four. The higher the score the more times the respondent indicated a preference for the White doll by selecting it.

The chart below compares scores by the respondents' racial and adoptive statuses.

Chart I. Mean Preference Scores for White Dolls by Race and Adoptive Statuses*

White Children Adopted and Born to White Families**	Negro Children Adopted	Indian-Asian Children Adopted
1.7 (163)	1.8 (101)	1.7 (33)

*Sixty-nine respondents did not answer all of the items that were needed to compile the score. Their partial responses were not included.

**The scores of the adopted White children were combined with those of the non-adopted White children after they were examined separately and no differences were found between the two groups.

The first expectation, that the Negro and Indian-Asian subjects would not exhibit a consistent preference for the White dolls as opposed to either of the Brown dolls is clearly demonstrated by the scores in Chart I. Out of a possible score of four, which would have meant that the White doll was selected in response to each question, the average score for the Negro children was 1.8 and for the Indian-Asian 1.7.[15] In other words Negro children selected the White dolls less than half of the time. Note also that the responses of the children in the three racial categories did not differ from each other.[16] They all manifested the same preferences. There is no evidence that any of the subjects preferred the White dolls over the Brown ones as has been reported in other studies.[17]

The distribution of responses to the items that measured racial awareness, i.e. ability to classify or identify dolls into appropriate racial categories are shown below.

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[15] Except when the failure to select indicated a White preference.

[16] In none of the racial categories did the ages of the children or their sex make any significant difference in the pattern of their responses. For example among the White children, the mean score for the boys was 1.6, for the girls 1.7. Among the Negro boys, as well as the girls, the mean score was 1.8.

[17] For some relatively recent examples see: Goodman, op. cit., Morland, op. cit., Trager and Yarrow, op. cit.-

Table 2. Per Cent Made Correct Racial Identifications by Race and Adoptive Statuses

Correct Identification	White Children	Negro Children	Indian-Asian Children
	(Per Cent Correct Identification)		
White Doll	82	72	76
Colored Doll: Lighter	43	45	52
Darker	47	44	48
Negro Doll: Lighter	33	39	43
Darker	56	43	46

The similarity in percentages across racial categories shows no one group of children made more accurate identifications (i.e. demonstrated greater racial awareness) than did any other. Further playing with the data revealed that practically all of the mistakes in identification that were made occured among children who were less than five years of age. But even the mistakes were distributed relatively evenly among subjects in the different racial groups. The three and four year old Negro respondents were no more accurate in their identifications than were the three and four year old White children.

On the matter of self identity, i.e. selecting the doll that looked like them: 76 per cent of the White children selected the White doll; 76 per cent of the Negro children selected either the lighter or the darker brown doll (31 and 45 per cents respectively) and 59 per cent of the Indian and Asian children selected the lighter or darker skinned doll (21 and 38 per cents respectively). The largest proportion of children in this latter category identified themselves with the White doll (41 per cent) and the smallest proportion identified themselves with the lighter skin brown doll, the one that in fact bears the greatest resemblance to them. On the identity dimension then, the major differences was between the Indian-Asian children and the White and Negro children. The fact that the Indian-Asian children had the lowest percentages of correct self identification is probably much less a matter of their ambivalence or self rejection than

it is that the dolls we used failed to provide them with an appropriate model with which to identify.

Finally we divided the children's responses according to the interviewers' perceptions of the shade of the subjects' skin color: light, medium, and dark. As shown by the *n*'s in Chart 2, almost all of the "light" children were White, most of the "dark" ones were Negro, and the "medium" ones fell into the Negro and Indian-Asian categories. Using the same scoring technique described earlier, each of the children received a score based on the number of positive White choices he or she made.

Chart 2. Mean Preference Scores for White Dolls by Perceived Skin Shade and Racial Statuses

LIGHT			MEDIUM			DARK		
White (149)	Negro (12)	Indian-Asian (4)	White (2)	Negro (58)	Indian-Asian (30)	White (2)	Negro (30)	Indian-Asian (3)
(1.7)	(2.3)	(---)	(---)	(1.8)	(1.8)	(---)	(2.0)	(---)
Combined Light: 1.8 (165)			Combined Medium: 1.8 (90)			Combined Dark: 1.9 (35)		

Like the scores in Chart 1, skin shade did not effect preferences for White or non-White dolls to any significant extent. On the whole, the mean scores of the light children were not noticeably different than those of the medium and dark children: 1.8, 1.8, and 1.9. When the frequencies were large enough to make comparisons within the same skin shade category, the preference scores did not show big differences. (Both the Negro and the Indian-Asian children in the medium category had scores of 1.8.) Thus the light, medium, and dark children all responded to White dolls with about the same degree of positiveness. The White dolls did not receive a preferential or more desirable status than did the non-White dolls from any category of respondents.

This is the first study of racial attitudes among young children in American society that has not reported a significant White racial preference among Black,

White or Oriental subjects. In her summary of the results of studies of children's racial attitudes, Judith Porter observed as recently as 1971:

> ...the outstanding finding in existing investigations of racial attitudes is that children of both races [White and Black] tend to exhibit preferences for White. ...Oriental children in Hawaii also tend to select Whites as playmates.[18]

These data strongly suggest that something is happening in these multi-racial families that is eroding the superior, or favored, or more attractive status that White seems to enjoy so pervasively among other American children. The erosion seems to be taking place without any noticeable confusion in the children's awareness of race or in their ability to label and identify themselves accurately.[19]

The dolls are but one test. Let us examine how the children responded to at least two other situations.

The next test examined the children's responses to the twelve sets of Black and White pictures. The six negative adjectives by which the children could characterize the Black and White pictures were: bad, stupid, naughty, dirty, mean, and ugly. The six positive adjectives were: pretty, smart, good, clean, nice, and kind. Each subject received two scores ranging from zero to six on the basis of the number of times he or she attributed a positive adjective to either the Black or the White picture , and the number of times he or she attributed a negative adjective to either the Black or White picture.

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[18] Judith Porter, op. cit., p. 28.

[19] In addition to age and sex, socio-economic status is another characteristic that might have influenced the children's responses; but it has been controlled for by the context in which the data were collected. White families that adopt non-White children are remarkably homogeneous in their status characteristics; for example, eighty per cent of the fathers in our sample are either professional men (i.e. lawyers, engineers, professors) or business executives; and 66 per cent of the mothers and 79 per cent of the fathers completed at least four years of college. Only seven per cent reported that their annual income was less than $10,000 and in almost all of those cases, one of the parents was in graduate or a professional school. Approximately half of the White children are siblings of half of the non-White children and among them socio-economic status is assuredly controlled. And, finally, since practically all of the children were adopted before they were one year of age, there is no question of prior status identity.

For example, if a respondent associated five of the positive adjectives with White pictures and one with a Black picture he received a score of five on the "White" positive dimension and a score of one on the "Black" positive dimension. Similarly, if he associated three negative adjectives with the White picutres and three with the Black pictures, he received a score of three on the "White" negative dimension and a score of three on the "Black" negative dimension. Table 3 summarizes the scores by Race and Adoptive Statuses.

Table 3. Mean Positive and Negative Scores for Black and White Pictures by Race and Adoptive Statuses

Black and White Picture Scores	White Children	Negro Children	Indian-Asian Children
Positive			
Black Pictures	2.1	2.3	2.2
White Pictures	3.9	3.7	3.8
Total	6.0	6.0	6.0
Negative			
Black Pictures	4.1	3.8	4.3
White Pictures	1.9	2.2	1.7
Total	6.0	6.0	6.0

Note two facts about the data in Table 3: 1) There are no significant differences in the scores among the three categories of children; 2) Irrespective of their own racial designation, children were more likely to identify White objects with positive adjectives and Black objects with negative adjectives. But no one group of respondents was more likely to do that than any other.[20]

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[20] The children were also divided into the light, medium and dark shade categories, and their responses were scored in the same manner. The results matched very closely those shown in Table 3. For example, the light children had a mean positive score of 3.9 for the White pictures, and the dark and medium children each had a mean score of 3.7. The negative scores on the White pictures were: light 1.8, medium 2.2, and dark 2.1.

We also divided the children's responses into homogeneous age categories: from 3 to 4 year olds; 4 to 5 year olds; 5 to 6 year olds; and 7 to 8 year olds. Only among the Negro children did age make a difference in their scores. The older Negro children were more likely to associate Black pictures with positive adjectives and White pictures with negative adjectives than were the younger children. Their scores are shown below.

	Negro Children				
	3-4 years	4-5 years	5-6 years	6-7 years	7-8 years
Positive Scores					
Black Pictures	1.9	1.4	2.1	2.4	3.1
White Pictures	4.1	4.5	3.9	3.6	2.9
Negative Scores					
Black Pictures	3.9	4.1	4.2	3.7	2.8
White Pictures	2.1	1.9	1.8	2.3	3.2

The Negro children who are between six and seven years old expressed more positive attitudes toward the Black images than did the younger children of the same race. Holding age constant and comparing across race, we still found that six and seven year old Black children scored higher on the Black positive dimension and lower on the Black negative dimension than did the White and Indian-Asian children.

Only among White children did sex made any difference. The White girls had higher scores for the Black pictures on the positive dimension than did the boys (2.6 compared to 1.8) and lower scores for the Black pictures on the negative dimension (3.7 compared to 4.4). Among the Negro and Indian-Asian children, the boys' and girls' scores were almost identical (2.4 v. 2.1, 3.8 v. 3.9, 2.1 v. 2.2, 4.4 v. 4.2).

We also compared the responses of our White subjects to each set of pictures against those reported by the children in the Williams-a son study

from which we adopted the instrument.[21] The two sets of data are reported in Table 4.

Table 4. Per Cent White Children Who Attribute Positive and Negative adjectives to Black and White Pictures in Two Studies.

Adjectives	SIMON		WILLIAMS-ROBERSON	
	White object (189)	Black object	White object (111)	Black object
	(in Per Cent)			
Pretty	70	30	87	13
Clean	82	17	85	15
Nice	58	42	84	16
Smart	59	41	82	18
Good	59	41	81	19
Kind	58	42	76	24
Ugly	37	63	17	83
Dirty	12	88	16	84
Naughty	31	69	8	82
Stupid	46	54	18	82
Bad	33	67	15	85
Mean	33	67	10	90

The results show that on 10 out of the 12 items, White children who are reared with Negro or other non-White siblings respond differently than White children reared in typical environments. A higher proportion of the children in the Williams-Roberson study associated White with positive and Black with negative attributes than did the White children in our study. The only two adjectives about which there were no significant differences were clean and dirty.

The age ranges of the two groups were very similar. The subjects in the Williams-Roberson study that was conducted in 1967 were between three and seven; ours were between

[21] Williams and Roberson, op. cit.

three and eight years old. One might argue that geography can explain most of the differences. White children in Chapel Hill, North Carolina express "southern" and therefore more anti-Negro attitudes than would a random selection of White children from Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin, etc. Therefore, it is the difference in geography rather than in family patterns that is the major explanation. We cannot prove the weakness of such an argument because we do not have responses from "typical" White children living in Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, etc. But from all the data we have seen on racial attitudes in all regions of the country, we doubt that children in North Carolina, especially those who live in a university community, are likely to express opinions that are more pro-White than are children in the Midwest.

On the basis then of the responses to the dolls and the pictures, it appears that families who have adopted transracially have succeeded in providing their young children with a somewhat different perspective and a different set of attitudes toward color and presumably race than those held by children who are reared in more typical family settings. Fewer of the White as well as the non-White children in "transracial" homes associate "White" with the positive and attractive and desirable characteristics that other White as well as Black children do in our society.

There was one more set of tasks each child was asked to perform. That involved putting together and taking apart figure shaped pieces of jigsaw puzzles that were constructed especially for this project. A child was given three puzzles each containing five figures: a mother, a father, two sons and a daughter. The figures in each group of five were all painted the same shade: white, dark brown, and yellowish brown.[22] The children were asked to perform several tasks with the puzzles, the first of which was to arrange <u>one</u> family composed of five

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[22] All the mothers were the same size and had the same clothes painted on them; similarly with the fathers, brothers, etc. The only difference between the three mothers, etc., was the shading of their skins.

members. In doing so they could select five pieces of the same skin shade, or five pieces of different shades. It turned out that over two-thirds of all the children, those who were themselves White, or Negro, or Indian arranged "a family" that contained persons that had different skin shades. They put together families of White mothers with Brown fathers (or the reverse) with Brown or White children. The White children were about as likely to do that as were the Negro and Indian-Asian children.

The second task involved putting together a family that was supposed to represent "their" family. In response to this request, 75 per cent of the White children picked the White mother and father figures; but only fifty-one per cent of the Negro children and 54 per cent of the Indian-Asian children selected the White mother and father figures. Thus, while in fact all of the children have White parents, about half of the Negro and half of the Indian-Asian children selected those parental figures whose skin shade matched more closely their own than it did the actual skin shade of their parents.[23] Younger Negro and Indian-Asian children were as likely to select the skin shades that matched their own as well as older children in those categories.

The third task involved having the children select those figures that looked like them, their brother(s) and their sister(s). Their choices are described below in Table 5.

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[23] The same choice pattern repeated itself when the children's responses were divided into the "light," "medium," and "dark" categories. The medium and dark children were much more likely to select the medium and dark mother and father figures than the light figures even though the lighter figures were closer replications of their own parents' color.

Table 5. Self and Sibling Selections by Sexual, Racial, and Adoptive Statuses of Respondent

Puzzle Selections	White		Negro		Indian-Asian	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
	(in per cent)					
Self						
Light	71	61	21	24	42	41
Medium	17	26	31	35	42	35
Dark	12	13	47	41	16	24
Brother						
Light	36	43	51	50	38	14
Meduum	29	32	20	18	25	50
Dark	35	25	29	32	37	36
Sister						
Light	53	44	53	32	33	50
Medium	21	28	23	48	42	20
Dark	26	28	24	20	25	30

On the self identity most of the White children selected the white figures, and seventy-five per cent of the Negro children selected the dark or the medium brown figures. But, for the Indian-Asian children, just as the selection of dolls was inadequate, the selection of available puzzle figures apparently also did not provide them with appropriate models. About as many chose the medium brown figures as did those who chose the white figures. Many fewer chose the darker brown figures.

Unlike the selection of parental figures, the choices of brothers and sisters were not biased in favor of any racial category. There was no tendency for White children to over select Whites or Negroes to over or under select s. Most probably the children's selections were derived from their real

life experiences, since 83 per cent of the non-White children have at least one White sibling and all of the White children have at least one non-White sibling.

Finally, the children were also asked to select the boy and the girl they would most like to play with; and then the boy and the girl they would most like to have visit them. These choices are described in Table 6 shown below.

Table 6. Friendship Selections by Sexual, Racial, and Adoptive Statuses of Respondents

Puzzle Selections	White		Negro		Indian-Asian	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
			(in per cent)			
Girl-Play						
Light	44	28	66	44	33	22
Medium	39	37	27	17	34	22
Dark	17	35	7	39	33	56
Boy-Play						
Light	33	48	39	16	45	33
Medium	33	23	29	52	33	33
Dark	34	29	32	32	22	34
Girl Visit						
Light	38	40	47	38	50	50
Medium	31	30	23	31	25	25
Dark	31	30	30	31	25	25
Boy Visit						
Light	44	30	43	21	55	31
Medium	34	43	26	41	18	54
Dark	32	27	31	38	27	15

Both in the children's response to siblings as well as to friends, it appears that "race" is not a prominent concern. There is no indication that White children over selected "White" or that the Negro children over selected those figures whose skin colors were closest to their own; nor did they over select White. The friendship choices like the sibling choices seem unaffected by color.

Concluding Remarks

Previous studies of young children's racial preferences have consistently reported pro-White attitudes on the part of White, Negro and Oriental children living in the United States. Other studies have suggested that Negro children acquired an awareness of race earlier than did White children, but were less likely to accurately identify themselves as Negro. In other words, while Negro children, at an earlier age than White children, are able to discriminate between racial categories because the concept of identity involves feelings or affect about race, Negro children's responses are likely to be less accurate than those of White children. The less accurate scores in identity measures are consistent then with the greater ambivalence that Negro children manifest in their attitudes toward race. While some of the studies referred to go back two or three decades, even those that were done in the 1960's, the era when slogans such as "Black Power" and "Black is beautiful" became popular, young Negro children continued to exhibit pro-White attitudes.

The major finding of our study thus far has been that Negro children who are reared in the special setting of multi-racial families do not acquire the ambivalence toward their own race that has been reported among all other groups of young Negro children. Our results also show that White children do not prefer "White" to other groups, and that there are no significant differences in the racial attitudes of any of the categories of children.

On the matter of identity, we found no evidence that White children made more accurate designations than did Negro children. So again on this dimension, these findings depart from the mode. The Indian and Asian children do have lower scores, but it is much more likely that their scores were an artifact of poor equipment and faulty design than they were a measure of their sense of identity.

There was only one instance in which the Negro children showed a lower sense of awareness of perhaps ambivalence about their identity than did the White children, and that was on the matter of selecting puzzle figures that

matched the skin shades of their own parents. The Negro, as well as the Indian-Asian children erred more than the White children in selecting figures whose skin shades matched their own rather than the figures whose skin shades had a closer resemblance to their parents. They did not make this error in selecting figures that represented either themselves or their siblings.

Looking at all of the results, it would appear that the practice of trans-racial adoption is having a significant, perhaps even a revolutionary impact on the racial identities and attitudes of young Negro and White children. What is likely to happen to these children in later years, during their adolescence and adulthood, is still too early to predict with any degree of accuracy. It may be that the attitudes and prevailing tones of the larger society will have sufficient impact so as to alter or confuse the identity and attitudes formed within the relatively unique setting of these multi-racial families. Follow up studies would be needed to answer questions about the future.

In conclusion, we return to one other theme that we commented upon at the outset and try to relate it to our findings. There is the possibility that the practice of transracial adoptions is now at its peak and will begin to decline with increasing momentum over the next few years. The major reason for the decline, should it occur, will be the success of Black Social Workers and other Black leaders in persuading public agencies of the dangerous long-run consequences of the practice for the survival of the Negro community. On this point, one can interpret the results reported in this paper as showing that the concept of a "racial" identity will not be as important as it has been in the past and that "color" as a proxy for race will not have as distinct and as strong an evaluative association as it has had. We see that the Negro children in this study did not confer upon Whiteness the desirable and attractive qualities that Negro children in typical settings have consistently done. The white pictures and the white dolls were not as favorably responded to and sought after by either the White or Negro subjects in our study as they have been by children in other more typical

contexts. But, on the other side, our findings offer no evidence that Negro children reared by White parents are acquiring a preference for Black over White. They show only that the Negro children perceive themselves as "Negro" as accurately as White children perceive themselves as "White." Whether that sense of "Negro" identity will persist and what affect will be attached to it as these children grow up, is still too early to say.